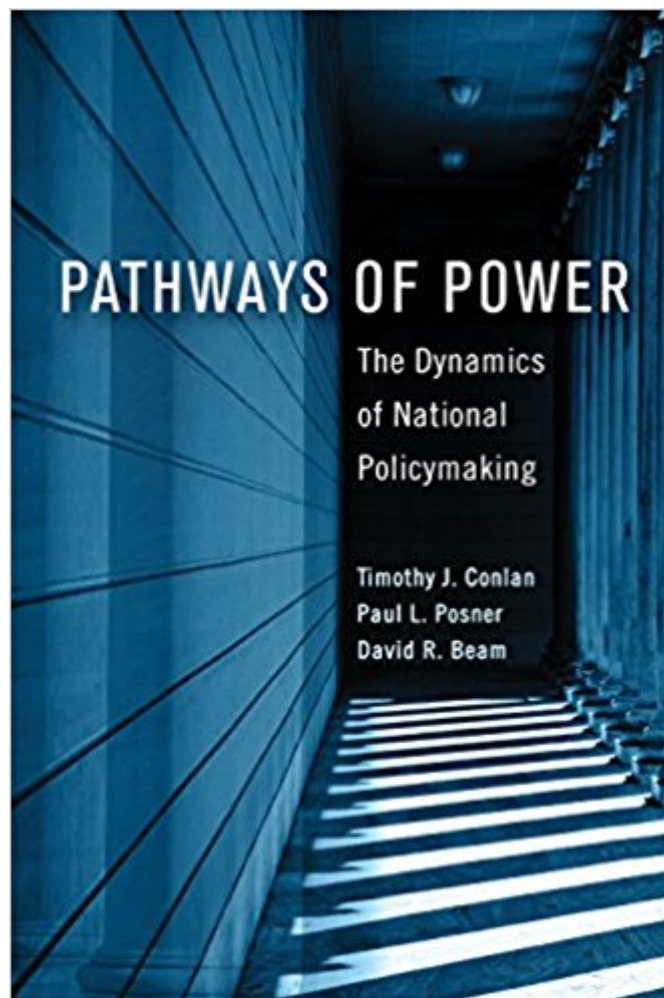


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# Pathways Of Power: The Dynamics Of National Policymaking (American Government And Public Policy)



## Synopsis

While civics textbooks describe an idealized model of "how a bill becomes law;" journalists often emphasize special interest lobbying and generous campaign contributions to Congress; and other textbooks describe common stages through which all policies progress, these approaches fail to convey *—* much less explain *—* the tremendous diversity in political processes that shape specific policies in contemporary Washington. Bridging the gap between textbook models of how public policy should work, and how the process actually works in contemporary Washington, *Pathways of Power* provides a framework that integrates the roles of political interests and policy ideals in the contemporary policy process. This book argues that the policy process can be understood as a set of four distinctive pathways of policymaking *—* pluralist, partisan, expert, and symbolic *—* that draw upon different political resources, appeal to different political actors, and elicit unique strategies and styles of coalition building. Revealing the strategic behavior of policy actors who compete to shift policies onto pathways that maximize their resources and influence, the book provides a fresh approach to understanding the seeming chaos and volatility of the policy process today. The book's use of a wide universe of major policy decisions and case studies, focused on such key areas as health care, federal budgeting, and tax policy, provides a useful foundation for students of the policy process as well as for policy practitioners eager to learn more about their craft.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An exceptional contribution to our understanding of the policy process, one that students new to

public policy as well as advanced scholars will appreciate. For new students, the book provides a concise, readable, and example-laden account of the policy process literature, and students with a background in recent domestic US policy will be particularly rewarded. Policy scholars will find its systematic invocation of ideas and expertise to be a refreshing addition to modeling the policy process." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*"Detailed, in-depth analysis political science readers will find enlightening and well researched" *Midwest Book Review*"What drives American national policymaking? Is it the mutual adjustment among contending interest groups, the agendas of unified party majorities, the ideas of policy experts, or the values and beliefs of ordinary citizens? Offering an interesting new framework that complements the classic models of Lowi and Wilson, Timothy J. Conlan, Paul L. Posner, and David R. Beam make a strong case that the answer depends in large part on the scale and method of political mobilization. Attentive to the diversity of actors who play agenda-setting roles in our contemporary political system, *Pathways of Power* offers a fresh, accessible overview of the policymaking process. Readers will come away with a more comprehensive and realistic view of how Washington works." *Eric M. Patashnik*, professor, Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia"Conlan, Posner, and Beam have written a remarkable book, one that can change how policy process scholars and students think about the field. Their fourfold categorization of 'pathways' to policy enactment offers a fresh look at how policies are made. Particularly welcome is the focus on expertise as a policy pathway, generally given little weight in current accounts. This is not surprising given the decades of practical experience as policy analysts the authors have, but it is so clearly critical that we all are indebted to them for emphasizing it." *Bryan Jones*, J.J. 'Jake' Pickle Regents' Chair in Congressional Studies, The University of Texas at Austin

Timothy J. Conlan is University Professor of Government at George Mason University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on public policy and intergovernmental relations, is a fellow with the National Academy of Public Administration, and has received the "best book," "best paper," and Daniel Elazar Distinguished Scholar Award from the Federalism Section of the American Political Science Association. He is the coauthor, with Paul Posner, of *Intergovernmental Management for the 21st Century*. Paul L. Posner is professor and director of the Master's in Public Administration program at George Mason University. He is a fellow and member of the Board of the National Academy of Public Administration, was president of the American Society for Public Administration, and is recipient of the American Political Science Association's Daniel Elazar Distinguished Scholar Award. His book, *The Politics of Unfunded Mandates*, won the Martha

Derthick Best Book Award from the Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations Section of the American Political Science Association and the best book award from the Academy of Management's Public and Nonprofit Division. David R. Beam (1942-2012) was director of the graduate program in public administration at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Previously, he served on the federal government's advisory commission on intergovernmental regulations. He retired in 2003, having published 11 major works and more than 45 scholarly articles.

This is a great book. It provides a user-friendly way to think about public policy making. The book is also well written. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in understanding the policy making process.

Great text for policy students. One of the most rational and easily understandable books I have used in my academic career. Would recommend for anyone interested in policy.

Required text.

Drs. Conan and Posner both taught me during my MPA studies, so this book was frequently required reading throughout the program. It is not only well researched and well thought out, but well written and concise. The authors are eloquent and informative and their theories while citing case studies from the past will endure well into the future. Anyone who is interested in studying or pursuing a career in public policy should read this book.

Realistic perspective of modern policymaking- highly recommend for academia and practitioners.

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